

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Celebrate Gold Discovery Day in Coloma on January 22

COLOMA: The anniversary of James Marshall's momentous discovery of gold in the tailrace of Sutter's Mill will be celebrated on Saturday, January 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park with living history, a speaker's symposium, interactive period trade demonstrations, and music from the Gold Rush era. The park is located on Highway 49, between Placerville and Auburn. For more information, call the park at (530) 295-2162.

The day's event will take visitors on a "Tour Through Time," beginning at 10:30 a.m., with a gold discovery reenactment on the banks of the American River at the very site where James Marshall found gold in 1848, followed by interpretive presentations at the Mormon Cabin, Sutter's Mill, and the Miner's Cabin. "The Tour Through Time" continues at 1 p.m. with a docent-led tour of many of the Park's historic houses.

A highlight of the day's events will be the ribbon cutting at noon to mark the completion of the new roof on the Park's Gold Discovery Museum, which was supported by a PG&E Community Challenge Grant and generous donations from area businesses and individuals.

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The day's activities will be kicked off at 10 a.m. with the raising of the Australian and Victoria flags in honor of Coloma's sister city, Clunes, which is the town where Australia's gold rush began in 1851.

It was in 1847 when John Sutter asked James Marshall to build a sawmill along the banks of the American River. Sutter needed lumber for his expanding agricultural enterprises in California's Sacramento Valley and Marshall, a carpenter, was looking for a job.

Marshall and Sutter chose Coloma as the site for the sawmill. It provided a rushing river for power and a forest of pines for lumber. As the sawmill neared completion in January 1848, it became clear that the tailrace, where the water leaves the mill, needed to be deepened. Marshall's solution was to use the force of the water itself to scour out a deeper channel. The increased force of water through the tailrace caused sand and gravel to lodge between boulders and in small crevices.

On the morning of January 24, 1848, James Marshall reached into a shallow pool of water at the side of the tailrace. He scooped up a handful of sand, gravel and mud. And a few flakes of golden metal. "Hey boys," he lifted his voice to workmen around him, "by God, I believe I've found a gold mine." It was a moment that was to change the course of history.

Visitors are welcome to Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park all year round. The park is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. seven days a week. The park is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day. For more information call the Park Museum and Visitors' Center at (530) 622-3470 or the Events Line at (530) 295-2162.

The event is supported by the Gold Discovery Park Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the interpretation and conservation of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park and can be visited at www.marshallgold.org.

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